

one-sided ; but he is unquestionably on the right track, and his critical, independent method was to lead others if not himself to the right goal. If in his hands it resulted in the creation of the "Prince," it was by-and-bye to lead others to question the right of the absolute monarch who might see in the "Prince" his historic justification. Once grant the principle of the untrammelled exercise of reason in the study of political history, and you sound the knell of all merely traditional authority in Church and State that does not commend itself to reason so enlightened.

Though we have no desire to belittle Machiavelli's originality as a political thinker, it is none the less patent that he owes the bent of his genius as much to his age as to himself. It was through him that the quickened intellectual life of the Renaissance struck a new vein in the strata of history. He had, moreover, Aristotle for his forerunner, though he shows himself more scientific in restricting his deductions to historic fact, and eschewing mere paper constitutions, mere Utopias like Plato's republic. It is equally true of him, as of Luther, that the age made the man. Rationality is its keynote, and in applying reason to history, observation and reflection to political problems, apart from theological theory, Machiavelli was only exemplifying the method which Guicciardini and others of his contemporaries were attempting to do, though in a less sustained and philosophic spirit. "It is beyond all doubt," says Villari in his "Life and Times of Machiavelli," "that the literature of the humanists produced, by the example of the ancients, a new intellectual training, and inevitably paved the way for the examination of social facts on purely human and natural grounds. Both their letters and their books of travel abound with admirable descriptions of manners and institutions of different peoples, together with valuable remarks on the causes of their decadence and their regeneration. We no longer meet with the eternal explanation of the hand of the Almighty guiding nations as a skilful driver may guide his fiery steed, for now instead the writer found the explanation of the facts he noted, in the temper of men, in their vices and their virtues. Indeed, this new tendency of the mind may be said to be the sole genuinely original quality of the learned men as political writers."